

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 25, 1997

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JULY 17, 1997

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 1, 1997

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 6

Introduced by Senators Solis, Lockyer, Calderon, and Hayden

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Honda)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Cardenas ~~and Torlakson~~,
Torlakson, Ackerman, Aguiar, Alquist, Aroner, Ashburn,
Baca, Baldwin, Battin, Baugh, Bordonaro, Bowen, Brown,
Bustamante, Caldera, Campbell, Cardoza, Cunneen, Davis,
Ducheny, Escutia, Figueroa, Firestone, Frusetta, Gallegos,
Goldsmith, Granlund, Havice, Hertzberg, House,
Kaloogian, Keeley, Kuehl, Kuykendall, Leach, Leonard,
Machado, Margett, Martinez, Mazzoni, McClintock,
Migden, Miller, Morrissey, Morrow, Murray, Napolitano,
Olberg, Oller, Ortiz, Pacheco, Papan, Perata, Poochigian,
Prenter, Pringle, Runner, Scott, Shelley, Strom-Martin,
Sweeney, Takasugi, Thompson, Thomson, Villaraigosa,
Vincent, Washington, Wayne, Wildman, Woods, and
Wright)

February 12, 1997

Senate Joint Resolution No. 6—Relative to Filipino
veterans' benefits.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 6, as amended, Solis. Filipino veterans of World War
II: veterans' benefits.

This measure would memorialize the President and the Congress of the United States to take action necessary to honor our country's moral obligation to provide Filipino veterans with the military benefits that they deserve, including, but not limited to, holding related hearings, and acting favorably on legislation pertaining to the granting of full veterans' benefits to Filipino veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Philippine Islands became a United
2 States possession in 1898 when they were ceded from
3 Spain following the Spanish-American War and remained
4 a possession of the United States until 1946; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1934, Congress passed Public Law
6 73-127, the Philippine Independence Act, that set a
7 10-year timetable for the eventual independence of the
8 Philippines and in the interim established a
9 Commonwealth of the Philippines with certain powers
10 over its internal affairs; and

11 WHEREAS, The granting of full independence
12 ultimately was delayed for two years until 1946 because
13 of the Japanese occupation of the islands from 1942 to
14 1945; and

15 WHEREAS, During the interval between 1934 and the
16 final independence in 1946, the United States retained
17 certain sovereign powers over the Philippines, including
18 the right, upon order of the President of the United
19 States, to call into the service of the United States Armed
20 Forces all military forces organized by the
21 Commonwealth government; and

22 WHEREAS, President Roosevelt invoked this authority
23 by executive order of July 26, 1941, bringing the
24 Philippine Commonwealth Army into the service of the
25 United States Armed Forces of the Far East under the
26 command of Lt. General Douglas MacArthur; and

27 WHEREAS, Two hundred thousand Filipino soldiers,
28 driven by a sense of honor and dignity, battled under
29 United States Command after 1941 to preserve our
30 liberty; and



1 WHEREAS, There are four groups of Filipino nationals
2 who are entitled to all or some of the benefits to which
3 United States veterans are entitled. These are:

4 (1) Filipinos who served in the regular components of
5 the United States Armed Forces.

6 (2) Regular Philippine Scouts, called “Old Scouts,”
7 who enlisted in Filipino-manned units of the United
8 States Army prior to October 6, 1945.

9 (3) Special Philippine Scouts, called “New Scouts,”
10 who enlisted in the United States Armed Forces between
11 October 6, 1945, and June 30, 1947, primarily to perform
12 occupation duty in the Pacific following World War II.

13 (4) Members of the Philippine Commonwealth Army
14 who on July 26, 1941, were called into the service of the
15 United States Armed Forces. This group includes
16 organized guerrilla resistance units that were recognized
17 by the United States Army; and

18 WHEREAS, The first two groups, Filipinos who served
19 in the regular components of the United States Army and
20 Old Scouts, are considered United States veterans and are
21 generally entitled to the full range of United States
22 veterans’ benefits; and

23 WHEREAS, The other two groups, New Scouts and
24 members of the Commonwealth Army, are eligible for
25 certain benefits, and some of these are paid at lower than
26 full rates. United States veterans’ medical benefits for the
27 four groups of Filipino veterans vary depending upon
28 whether the person resides in the United States or the
29 Philippines; and

30 WHEREAS, The Old Scouts were created in 1901
31 pursuant to the Act of February 2, 1901, that authorized
32 the President of the United States “to enlist natives [of the
33 Philippines] ... for service in the Army, to be organized as
34 scouts ... or as troops or companies, as authorized by this
35 Act, for the regular Army”; and

36 WHEREAS, Prior to World War II, these troops assisted
37 in the maintenance of domestic order in the Philippines
38 and served as a combat ready force to defend the islands
39 against foreign invasion; and

1 WHEREAS, During the war, they participated in the
2 defense of and retaking of the islands from Japanese
3 occupation. The eligibility of Old Scouts for benefits
4 based on military service in the United States Armed
5 Forces, including veterans' benefits, has long been
6 established; and

7 WHEREAS, The federal Department of Veterans
8 Affairs operates a comprehensive program of veterans'
9 benefits in the Republic of the Philippines, including the
10 operation of a federal Department of Veterans Affairs
11 office in Manila; and

12 WHEREAS, The federal Department of Veterans
13 Affairs does not operate a program of this type in any
14 other country; and

15 WHEREAS, The program in the Philippines evolved
16 because the Philippines were a United States possession
17 during the period 1898–1946, and many Filipinos have
18 served in the United States Armed Forces, and because
19 the preindependence Commonwealth Army of the
20 Philippines was called into the service of the United
21 States Armed Forces during World War II (1941–1945);
22 and

23 WHEREAS, Our nation, however, has failed to meet
24 the promises made to those Filipino soldiers who fought
25 as American soldiers during World War II; and

26 WHEREAS, Many Filipino veterans have been
27 discriminated against by the classification of their service
28 as not being service rendered in the United States Armed
29 Forces for purposes of benefits from the federal
30 Department of Veterans' Affairs; and

31 WHEREAS, Filipinos gallantly served at Bataan and
32 Corregidor, giving their toil, blood, and lives so as to
33 provide the United States valuable time to rearm
34 materiel and men to launch the counteroffensive in the
35 Pacific war; and

36 WHEREAS, All other nationals, even foreigners, who
37 served in the United States Armed Forces have been
38 recognized and granted full rights and benefits, but the
39 Filipinos who actually were American nationals at that
40 time were and are still denied recognition and singled out



1 for exclusion, and this treatment is unfair and
2 discriminatory; and

3 WHEREAS, On March 6, 1997, House Resolution No.
4 836, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, was introduced in
5 the United States House of Representatives, to deem
6 service in the organized military forces of the
7 government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines
8 and the Philippine Scouts during World War II to be
9 active service for the purpose of benefits under programs
10 administered by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs; and

11 WHEREAS, The proposed legislation would bring
12 relief to the estimated remaining 60,000 to 70,000 Filipino
13 veterans (out of the initial 175,000 to 200,000 troops) who
14 risked their lives during World War II, surviving the
15 occupation of the Philippine Islands and the infamous
16 Bataan Death March, and who, now in their mid-60's to
17 mid-90's, have been battling for years to obtain the
18 benefits of other veterans of that war; and

19 WHEREAS, On October 20, 1996, President Clinton
20 issued a proclamation honoring the nearly 100,000
21 Filipino veterans of World War II, soldiers of the
22 Philippine Commonwealth Army, who fought as a
23 component of the United States Forces alongside Allied
24 Forces for four long years to defend and reclaim the
25 Philippine Islands, and thousands more who joined the
26 United States Armed Forces after the war; now,
27 therefore, be it

28 *Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of*
29 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of
30 California respectfully memorializes the President and
31 Congress of the United States to take action necessary to
32 honor our country's moral obligation to provide Filipino
33 veterans with the military benefits that they deserve,
34 including, but not limited to, holding related hearings,
35 and acting favorably on legislation pertaining to granting
36 full veterans' benefits to Filipino veterans of the United
37 States Armed Forces; and be it further

38 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit a
39 copy of this resolution to the President and Vice President
40 of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of

- 1 Representatives, and to each Senator and Representative
- 2 from California in the Congress of the United States.

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